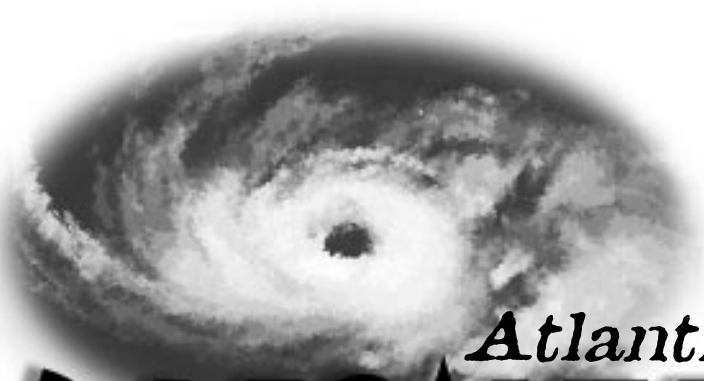


The Naming of



Atlantic

HURRICANES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE • NOAA • NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

HISTORY OF HURRICANE NAMES

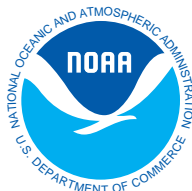
For several hundred years, many hurricanes in the West Indies were named after the particular saint's day on which the hurricane occurred. Ivan R. Tannehill describes in his book "Hurricanes" the major tropical storms of recorded history and mentions many hurricanes named after saints. For example, there was "Hurricane Santa Ana" which struck Puerto Rico with exceptional violence on July 26, 1825, and "San Felipe" (the first) and "San Felipe" (the second) which hit Puerto Rico on September 13 in both 1876 and 1928.

Tannehill also tells of Clement Wragge, an Australian meteorologist, who began giving women's names to tropical storms before the end of the 19th century.

An early example of the use of a woman's name for a storm was in the novel "Storm" by George R. Stewart, published by Random House in 1941, and since filmed by Walt Disney. During World War II, this practice became widespread in weather map discussions among forecasters, especially Air Force and Navy meteorologists who plotted the movements of storms over the wide expanses of the Pacific Ocean.

In 1953, the United States abandoned as confusing a two-year old plan to name storms by a phonetic alphabet (Able, Baker, Charlie) when a new, international phonetic alphabet was introduced. That year, this Nation's weather services began using female names for storms.

The practice of naming hurricanes solely after women came to an end in 1978 when men's and women's names were included in the Eastern North Pacific storm lists. In 1979, male and female names were included in lists for the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.



WHY HURRICANES ARE NAMED

Experience shows that the use of short, distinctive given names in written as well as spoken communications is quicker and less subject to error than the older more cumbersome latitude-longitude identification methods. These advantages are especially important in exchanging detailed storm information between hundreds of widely scattered stations, airports, coastal bases, and ships at sea.

The use of easily remembered names greatly reduces confusion when two or more tropical storms occur at the same time. For example, one hurricane can be moving slowly westward in the Gulf of Mexico, while at exactly the same time another hurricane can be moving rapidly northward along the Atlantic coast. In the past, confusion and false rumors have arisen when storm advisories broadcast from one radio station were mistaken for warnings concerning an entirely different storm located hundreds of miles away.

PRESENT PROCEDURE IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC, CARIBBEAN, AND GULF OF MEXICO

The National Hurricane Center near Miami, FL, keeps a constant watch on oceanic storm-breeding areas for tropical disturbances which may herald the formation of a hurricane. If a disturbance intensifies into a tropical storm – with rotary circulation and wind speeds above 39 miles per hour – the Center will give the storm a name from one of the six lists below. A separate set is used each year beginning with the first name in the set. After the sets have all been used, they will be used again. The 1996 set, for example, will be used again to name storms in the year 2002. The letters Q, U, X, Y, and Z are not included because of the scarcity of names beginning with those letters. In addition, after major land-falling storms having major economic impact, the names are retired.

The name lists have an international flavor because hurricanes affect other nations and are tracked by the public and weather services of countries other than the United States. Names for these lists are selected from library sources and agreed upon by nations involved during international meetings of the World Meteorological Organization.

THE SIX-YEAR LIST OF NAMES FOR ATLANTIC STORMS

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Ana	Alex	Arlene	Alberto	Allison	Arthur
Bill	Bonnie	Bret	Beryl	Barry	Bertha
Claudette	Charley	Cindy	Chris	Chantal	Cristobal
Danny	Danielle	Dennis	Debby	Dean	Dolly
Erika	Earl	Emily	Ernesto	Erin	Edouard
Fabian	Frances	Floyd	Florence	Felix	Fay
Grace	Georges	Gert	Gordon	Gabrielle	Gustav
Henri	Hermine	Harvey	Helene	Humberto	Hanna
Isabel	Ivan	Irene	Isaac	Iris	Isidore
Juan	Jeanne	Jose	Joyce	Jerry	Josephine
Kate	Karl	Katrina	Keith	Karen	Kyle
Larry	Lisa	Lenny	Leslie	Lorenzo	Lili
Mindy	Mitch	Maria	Michael	Michelle	Marco
Nicholas	Nicole	Nate	Nadine	Noel	Nana
Odetta	Otto	Ophelia	Oscar	Olga	Omar
Peter	Paula	Philippe	Patty	Pablo	Paloma
Rose	Richard	Rita	Rafael	Rebekah	Rene
Sam	Shary	Stan	Sandy	Sebastien	Sally
Teresa	Tomas	Tammy	Tony	Tanya	Teddy
Victor	Virginie	Vince	Valerie	Van	Vicky
Wanda	Walter	Wilma	William	Wendy	Wilfred